



FRIENDS OF THE HOLY LAND

“FRIENDS – SUPPORTING THE CHRISTIANS”

December 2013 update from the FHL

- **New FHL Trustees and Chairman**

At a recent meeting of the trustees, Norah Whelan and Jim Quinn were appointed trustees and Jim Quinn was appointed Chairman of the Trustees. Peter Rand, Vice-Chairman, writes “I am very pleased that Jim has agreed to become a trustee and take the role of Chairman. I have worked with him in a number of capacities for many years and his knowledge of the FHL from one of our most successful Groups, Wyre Forest, along with his wide experience of numerous organisations will be most valuable to the Trustees and the Management Committee”.

- **Appointment of Office Manager**

With immediate effect, Karen Baxter, one of our office volunteers, has been appointed Office Manager, working 5 mornings a week. Karen will be responsible for all aspects of the FHL office, working with the team of volunteers to manage the increasing demands on their time as the FHL grows, both in this country and the Holy Land

- **Sean**

Sean is handing over the management of the office to Karen, in order to enable him to spend all of his time supporting our ‘Friends’ around the country. This will include existing and embryonic FHL Parish and Deanery Groups, our ever growing number of Anglican and RC Diocesan Co-ordinators and everyone else who contributes to achieving our objectives. Sean will also have a specific role in approaching charitable trusts, whilst always keeping in touch with FHL work in the Holy Land. More detail of the implications of these changes will be included in subsequent updates. Meanwhile an immediate impact will be that the office will temporarily return to being manned mornings only. If a reply is not required that day please leave a message on the telephone number or email below. If it is urgent, please email Sean at sean.higgins@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk

- **Meeting of Trustees and Management Committee**

The trustees and members of the Management Committee met on 25 November to review the first 4 years and where we are now, with a view to setting out a strategy for the next 5 years. The plans are ambitious as we continue to increase our reach

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to Christians across the West Bank, Gaza, Israel and Jordan. It is intended that the Plan will be finalised by 31 March and you will be kept informed of progress.

- **Croydon Deanery**

Congratulations to parishes within the Croydon Deanery who have agreed to raise £120,000 in 2014, which will enable a housing project in Beit Sahour to begin. This will provide apartments for 10 Christian families. This Advent, the FHL message will reach 10 parishes with 2 more to follow early next year. Thank you in particular to Rosita Thomas in Croydon for driving this initiative with the support of Canon Joseph Collins, following a recent pilgrimage.

- **Family Support**

Family support to the most needy families in the Bethlehem area continues to grow. Currently the number of families approaches 40 and each of their circumstances are being reviewed prior to January 2014.

- **Visit by Fr. Abusada**

Fr. Abusada made a brief visit to the UK in November, initially at the invitation of Fr. John Deehan who led the recent FHL pilgrimage. Fr. Abusada stayed in Eastcote, Uxbridge, Weybridge and Tolworth parishes, meeting local parishioners and 'friends'. He shared the work of the School of Joy, a school for young people with 'Special Needs', where he is the Director. Olive wood products made at the School of Joy sold well. Thank you to everyone who hosted Fr. Abusada and contributed in any way to the arrangements for his visit. He was very pleased.

- **Christmas Distribution**

500 named families will this year be receiving a Christmas gift from the FHL, amounting to \$100 for each family. Thank you to everyone who donates to FHL who make these 'presents' possible at a time when many of us will be enjoying the good things of life.

- **Footage in the Holy Land**

Thank you to James who spent some weeks in the Holy Land recently and arranged for a professional cameraman to take some footage of our projects, which is to be made into a short film for people to share with supporters.

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- **Sean's Travels:** A busy time started with a dinner with the St. Ambrose Old School Boys Association in Hale Barns and an introduction to potential benefactors. The Westminster Towards Advent event allowed for volunteers Lyn, Pam and Maureen to sell olive wood items and fly the FHL flag with Sean; an event opened by Archbishop Vincent Nichols, a Patron of FHL. Fr. Abusada arrived and was then accompanied to Weybridge for a successful reception at the home of a local 'Friend' and visited St Charles Borromeo school for assembly and St George's school to meet the head teacher and see their facilities. At Tolworth, a talk and sale of olive wood items has crystallised into a parish group being set up. This coming weekend Sean is in Hampstead, then Bloxwich, Sheldon (Birmingham), Lillington and finally Thornton Heath in the Croydon Deanery as part of the initiative to talk at all Parishes in the area.
- **Peter's Travels**
What a month! I was very pleased to attend the Jazz concert at St. Dunstan's Mayfield which raised over £1,900 for the FHL. Congratulations! The following week it was Jersey where a new ecumenical FHL Group across the Island pledged to raise £10,000. The Middle East Forum at the offices of the Catholic Bishops Conference provided the opportunity to share experiences in the Holy Land with others working in the region. Then there was the privilege of staying in Eastcote with Fr. John and Fr. Abusada from the School of Joy before sharing with colleagues our aspirations for the FHL and our work for the Christian communities over the next 5 years. As I write this on 30th, it is down to Croydon to speak at St. Mary's, a parish with 2,000 parishioners and nine Masses each weekend.
- **Next Newsletter and updated brochure**
The next Newsletter is being assembled by John Bradshaw and will be ready for distribution early in January. An updated FHL brochure is also being finalised.
- **Happy Christmas**
The Trustees, members of the Management Committee and all volunteers in the office wish all our readers and very happy and Blessed Christmas and a healthy New Year. As we approach Christmas our thoughts turn especially to those of our Brothers and Sisters in the greatest need of our prayers at this time. We remember also our representatives in the Holy Land and thank them for their efforts at this busy time in the FHL calendar. May God Bless you all in this season of Advent.

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